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Transcribed c.1976 by IB, typed 4 September 2012 by IB, and checked against a photocopy of the letter (the MS has not been found)

Cover: "Mrs R D Jones / Portarlinton / near Melbourne / Victoria

Joy Hall to Fanny Jones, 11 October 1897

Mallina Station

October 11<sup>th</sup> 1897

My dear cousin Fanny

Of course you think we have forgotten all about you, but we are not so base as that, the real reason is, our house was completely dismantled, we have been putting in our time ever since the 28<sup>th</sup> June (date of arrival) arranging our home. Also greeting old friends, & calling on the strangers the least enjoyable! We had promised cousin Val several times, we would come out, so we were obliged to make up our minds and return with him because the weather will be insufferably hot in another month. There seems to me, to be a gloom overshadowing Mallina still.

The journey out is rather long, a distance of about 65 miles, but when we reached the Sherlock cousin Tilly was there waiting, so that made the drive pleasanter. Val has a nice piece of ground under cultivation it is watered by a windmill.

Mother and I are pleased with little Reggie he is a bonny boy, he does not resemble either parent, he is considered to take after the Halls; the best looking members of the family I presume. I am sorry we cannot take a run over to Yandyarra, as it is only 35 miles (Ernest's & Reg's Station) but Mallina unfortunately escaped the deluge after the drought, so that horses are not very plentiful. Ernest & Reg were highly favoured, there was a heavier rainfall at Yandyarra than any other station 14 inches in one downpour, heaven knows whether it will continue, but they are in a fair way to clear the place, & the other two Stations they each have a share in are likely to flourish.

The last news I heard of Eva was, that she had gone back to Cundenup cousin Frances' place, when we were South she was staying at Claremont & Rottnest after she left the Park, then for a little while she tried nursing, but as it was a hospital for incurables, she did not find it

cheerful enough, she says she does not intend to return until May (I suppose she is going to teach the Cundenup girls). Mr [?Brundrill] is on the overland route again, & it will probably be four or five months before she sees him. I suppose you have not seen anything of the Andersons? Daisy said in her last letter, her Father had been dangerously ill, & his life almost despaired of.

I am rather disappointed we are starting for town in the freshness of the morning, Mother is anxious to get home & we do not want to have an extra trip on our account. Tilly's brothers are coming down from Derby, & as they wish to see their sister, we have arranged to take the carriage with a native in for them.

There is a great deal of talk about Cossack becoming a very minor Port & all the trade going to Ballaballa, the strange part is that the Government are doing more for Cossack than ever they did before.

My brothers have as much work as they can cope with, there is plenty to do, but not a great deal to show for it, one of Aubrey's clerks was taken ill five or six weeks ago, & is only just convalescent, so that he has been thronged with work. I must bid you adieu, my cousin. With love to Aunt Sarah yourself & cousin Robert, from Mother & self I remain

Your affectionate cousin

Joy H M Hall